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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Saturday, June 20, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "AMERICAN HOMEMAKING ON EXHIBIT." Information from the Extension Office, United States Department of Agriculture.

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More news from our Department-of-Agriculture correspondent today. She writes: "I know you have heard a good deal already about the 7000 or so farm women from more than 30 countries who met here in Washington the first week of June. But I can't stop talking about that meeting until I have told you of one of its most interesting features -- the exhibits sent from the different States to show how American farm-homemakers are keeping up-to-date with their jobs through their home demonstration clubs.

"Arranged in booths on either side of the big Government auditorium where the delegates had their meetings each day were the exhibits from the various States -- each one a picture of some phase of modern homemaking. And at almost any hour you could see crowds of women gathered around looking at them. You might see the delegate from Germany inspecting the convenient farm kitchen sent from Ohio, or the delegate from far-away Ceylon or Sweden or Switzerland looking at Virginia's display of a planned food supply for the farm family, or Michigan's showing of home equipment for young children, or New York's remodeled living room."

Our correspondent goes on to say: "Any American woman interested in the job of running a home but particularly a farm home would have enjoyed this series of pictures of the activities of her neighbors in other States. But next best to seeing a good thing is hearing about it. So I'll do my best to describe these exhibits for you.

"Home demonstration clubs in Michigan have been particularly interested in the study of child development. So they chose their exhibit accordingly -- simple, home-made furnishings to meet the needs of the young child in the home. The theme of the exhibit was: "Help your child to help himself." Easily made, convenient, low toy-shelves for living room or nursery illustrated the idea that the child can care for his own toys. A set of garden equipment -- rake, shovel and hoe in small size, hung on low pegs showed how the right tools make it possible for the three or four-year-old to tend his own garden. A small dining table and chair with small-size dishes and silver carried out the idea that the child can serve himself. And a low wash-stand made from an orange-crate with a low mirror and convenient rack for towels showed how 'he can wash himself.' This exhibit also featured a convenient wardrobe equipment for a youngster -- a low rod holding small clothes hangers, low convenient shelves for shoes, low hooks -- all making it possible for the young child to hang up his own clothing.

"In the next booth was New Hampshire's clothing exhibit -- a contrasting picture of the job of clothing the family yesterday and today. Colonial housewives labored all winter to spin yarn, weave cloth and sew by hand. Their sewing tools were quaint but far from convenient. Today mills make cloth and the farm housewife can turn out garments in a few hours with modern sewing conveniences



and the knowledge of how to use them. Home demonstration clubs study selection, remodeling and care of clothing. Today's home sewing room, as shown in the exhibit, had a convenient cutting-table, sewing machine, electric iron and ironing board, dress-form, paper-patterns, portable screen to hold small sewing equipment like thread and needles, and good lighting arrangements.

"The exhibit that drew some of the largest crowds was the one from Virginia showing the practical use American farm women are making of the study of foods and nutrition. There on display was an adequate yearly supply of food which could be produced largely on the farm. There was exactly the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables needed from the farm garden, canned and cured foods for winter use as well as milk, butter, cheese, eggs, meat, flour, cereals and so on in proper amounts for good nutrition. A chart on the wall showed why such planned home-production of food was a saving in money as well as an investment in health. According to this chart, carefully worked out by nutritionists and economists, feeding a farm family during the 22-year period necessary to bring up 2 children is a \$12,000 enterprise. (By the way, the figures on this chart are based on retail prices of September 1934.) The chart showed that adequate, moderate-cost food for the father of a family for 22 years would cost \$4000, while the mother's food for the same period would total \$3700. Feeding the son in the family from birth to 18 years would cost \$2200 and feeding the daughter for 18 years would cost \$2000. You can see what an expense feeding a family of four can be if you have to buy all your food. But this exhibit showed that a farm homemaker who takes advantage of her knowledge of food values, of modern canning and preserving methods, who knows the latest about preparing food and making menus can cut this food cost for her family to a far lower figure.

"Now let me tell you about Maryland's exhibit. Perhaps you know that Maryland is one of the States where some home demonstration clubs have been very successful in running farm women's markets. So the exhibit featured the marketing of home products, showed some of the products that are providing a regular income for Maryland women -- homemade bread and rolls, angel cake, fancy cookies, steamed brown bread and steamed puddings, jellies, preserves, beautifully canned fruits and vegetables, baked beans, home-churned farm butter, fresh eggs and so on. Maryland marketers believe that their success is largely the result of keeping their products up to highest standards of quality. On the wall near the display was a score-board showing how bread and cake brought to the market for sale are checked for quality according to Extension Service teachings.

"Clubs in New York have been much interested in home furnishings during the last few years. The women have learned how to make over furniture -- to refinish, upholster, make slip covers. They have learned how to make new rugs and dye and repair old ones. They have studied curtaining, home-lighting, arrangement of furniture and block printing. So their exhibit showed a living room furnished largely with these hand-made or made-over pieces. The comfort of every member of the family was considered in this pleasant living room -- a corner for the small youngster with his toy shelves and small chair, a comfortable table, light and chair for the school-child with his books or stamp collection, an easy chair, good light and convenient side-table for father with his book and pipe, and for mother with her knitting a comfortable seat on the good-looking, green, made-over lounge. Which reminds me -- when Mrs. Roosevelt came over to see the exhibits, she went in this family living room, seated herself on that very lounge, took out her knitting and quietly demonstrated the usefulness of the room.

"If I had time today, I'd like to go on and tell you about the school-lunch exhibit from New Jersey and the landscaping exhibit from West Virginia. But I'll have to postpone that story for another time."

And that concludes our correspondent's picture of the home demonstration exhibits from the different states shown recently in Washington, D. C.

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